SUPERMAN® & THE METAL MEN®
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
CHEMO™ IS BACK!
W-WITH SUPERMAN'S P-POWER!
FORGET IT, GANG--EVEN COMBINED WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO STOP HIM!
BY JOHN BYRNE AND DICK GIORDANO

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BETTER LIVING ~~DYING~~ THROUGH CHEMISTRY

NOW, *THIS* IS WHERE IT GETS *REALLY* INTERESTING.

IN THIS VAT WE *REPROCESS* MATERIALS FROM *INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS*.

CHEMICAL *SPILLS*, THAT SORT OF THING.

IN THIS FASHION WE'RE ABLE TO RETRIEVE *THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS WORTH* OF USABLE CHEMICALS.

AND, OF COURSE, THAT *SAVINGS* TO THE COMPANY IS PASSED ON TO CONSUMERS IN THE FORM OF LOWER *PRICES* FOR OUR PRODUCTS!

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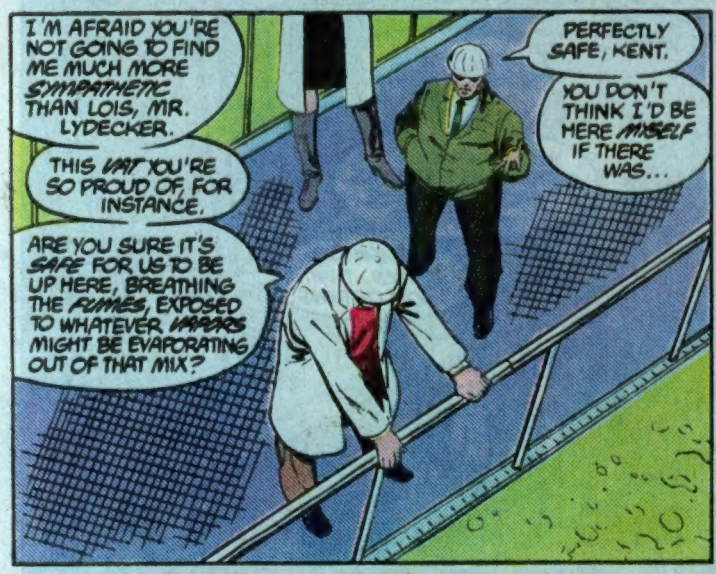
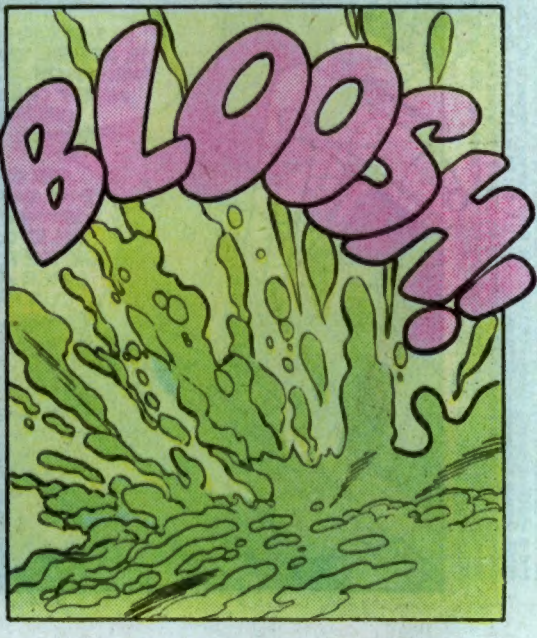
JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

ALL OF WHICH MAKES UP IN SOME PART FOR THE RAPE OF THE ENVIRONMENT YOU OTHERWISE CAUSE?
SOMEHOW I CAN'T BELIEVE EVEN THE MOST MERCENARY OF YOUR CUSTOMERS WOULD TRADE PINE FORESTS OR CLEAN BEACHES FOR A FEW EXTRA PENNIES IN THEIR POCKETS.
HM! AND WHAT DO YOU SAY, KENT?
I WAS WARNED MISS LANE MIGHT BE SOMEWHAT HOSTILE TO OUR ENDEAVORS...
BUT SO FAR YOU'VE HAD VERY LITTLE TO SAY.

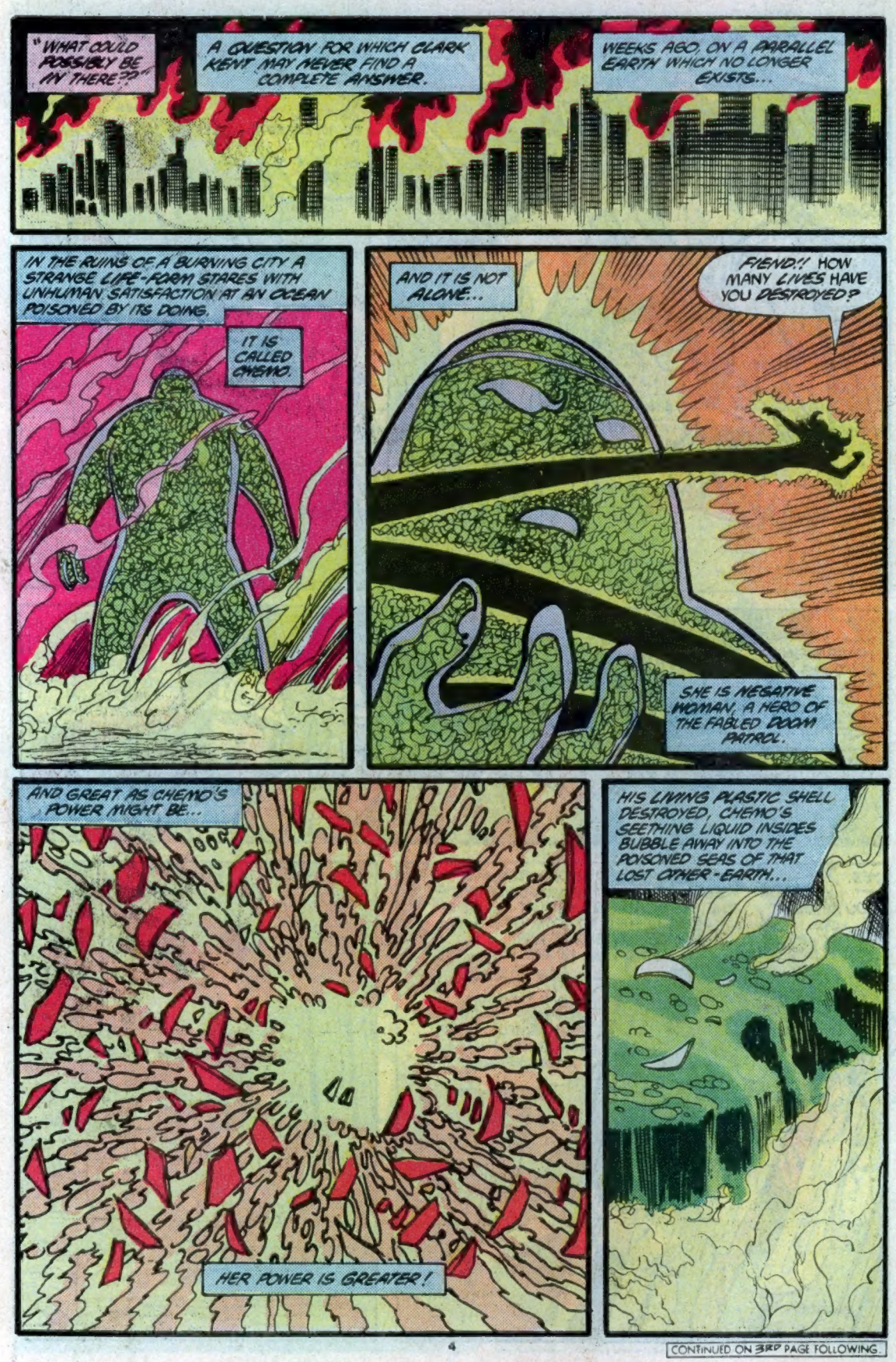

I'M AFRAID YOU'RE NOT GOING TO FIND ME MUCH MORE SYMPATHETIC THAN LOIS, MR. LYDECKER.
THIS VAT YOU'RE SO PROUD OF, FOR INSTANCE.
ARE YOU SURE IT'S SAFE FOR US TO BE UP HERE, BREATHING THE FUMES, EXPOSED TO WHATEVER HORRORS MIGHT BE EVAPORATING OUT OF THAT MIX?
PERFECTLY SAFE, KENT.
YOU DON'T THINK I'D BE HERE MYSELF IF THERE WAS...

HEY...
WHAT...??
TONG

CLARK!!
WHOOPS!!


BLOOSH!!

CLARK! HOLD ON! TRY NOT TO SWALLOW!
KENT! HERE! GRAB HOLD OF THIS!
BLAST!
IT HAPPENED SO FAST THERE WAS NO TIME TO PREVENT MYSELF FALLING WITHOUT REVEALING TO LOIS THAT I'M SUPERMAN!
WHAT...WHAT HAPPENED?
GOT TO PRETEND TO BE AFFECTED BY MY SUDDEN BATH.
I--: AGGEH!:.. I DON'T KNOW, LOIS!
IT SEEMS LIKE THE RAILING JUST...DISSOLVED AWAY!
AUH!!
NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT! SHOULDN'T BE ANYTHING CORROSIVE IN THE VAPORS FROM THAT VAT!
C'MON, CLARK. WE'D BETTER GET YOU WASHED OFF BEFORE YOU MUTATE INTO A TURTLE OR SOMETHING.
YES.
YES, YOU'RE RIGHT, LOIS.
PROCESSING
STRANGE... I USED MY MICROSCOPIC VISION TO CHECK THE COMPONENTS OF THE CHEMICALS IN THAT VAT-- JUST IN CASE I NEEDED TO COME UP WITH A NON-SUPER EXCUSE FOR SURVIVING MY DIP--
--AND I FOUND NOTHING THAT SHOULD BE HARMFUL TO ME, ESPECIALLY WITH MY INVULNERABLE SKIN.
"YET...I'M TINGLING ALL OVER.
"WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE IN THERE??"


"WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE IN THERE??"
A QUESTION FOR WHICH CLARK KENT MAY NEVER FIND A COMPLETE ANSWER.
WEEKS AGO, ON A PARALLEL EARTH WHICH NO LONGER EXISTS...
IN THE RUINS OF A BURNING CITY A STRANGE LIFE-FORM STARES WITH UNHUMAN SATISFACTION AT AN OCEAN POISONED BY ITS DOING.
IT IS CALLED CHEMO.
AND IT IS NOT ALONE...
FIEND!! HOW MANY LIVES HAVE YOU DESTROYED?
SHE IS NEGATIVE WOMAN, A HERO OF THE FABLED DOOM PATROL.
AND GREAT AS CHEMO'S POWER MIGHT BE...
HER POWER IS GREATER!
HIS LIVING PLASTIC SHELL DESTROYED, CHEMO'S SEETHING LIQUID INSIDES BUBBLE AWAY INTO THE POISONED SEAS OF THAT LOST OTHER-EARTH...

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

THE MENACE OF CHEMO WOULD HAVE BEEN GONE FOR ALL TIME.
BUT, IN THE TERRIBLE CRISIS WHICH BESET ALL THE INFINITE EARTHS THERE CAME A GREAT MERGING.
WHERE ONCE THERE HAD BEEN AS MANY WORLDS AS THERE MIGHT BE MINDS TO IMAGINE THEM, NOW THERE REMAINED BUT ONE.

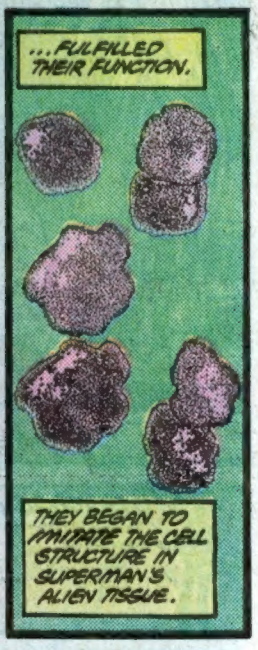
AND THUS THE CHEMICALS OF CHEMO'S SHATTERED BODY FOUND THEIR WAY BACK TO THEIR HOMEWORLD..
WHERE AN UNSUSPECTING POPULACE PERCEIVED THEM AS YET ANOTHER ACCIDENT OF THE INDUSTRIAL AGE.

THEY WERE COLLECTED...
AND FOR MANY MONTHS, SOMEHOW DEFYING SEPARATION, THEY LANGUISHED IN A GREAT VAT...

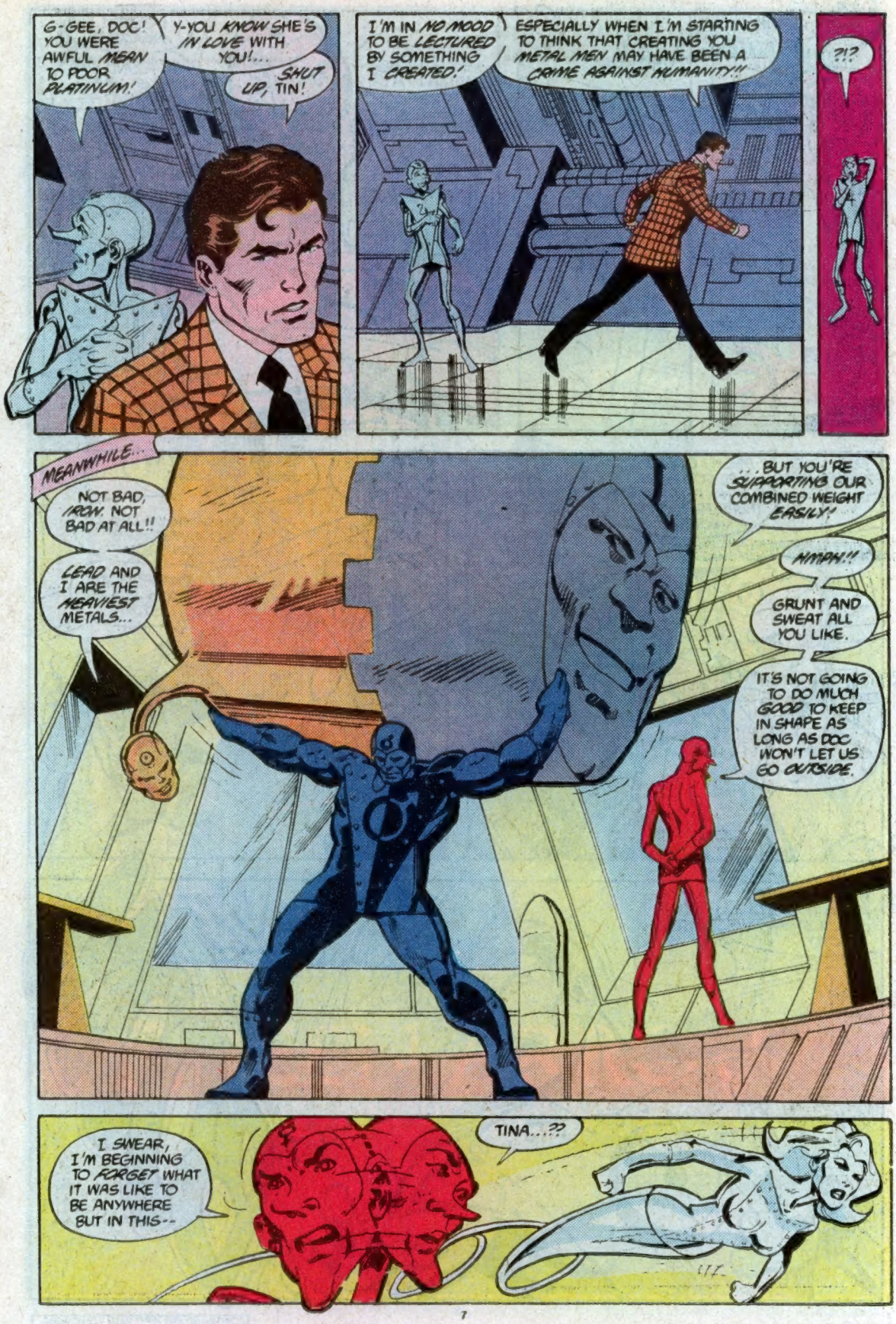
...UNTIL CLARK KENT FOUND HIMSELF IMMERSED IN THEM.
THAT'S WHEN SOMETHING BEGAN TO HAPPEN...

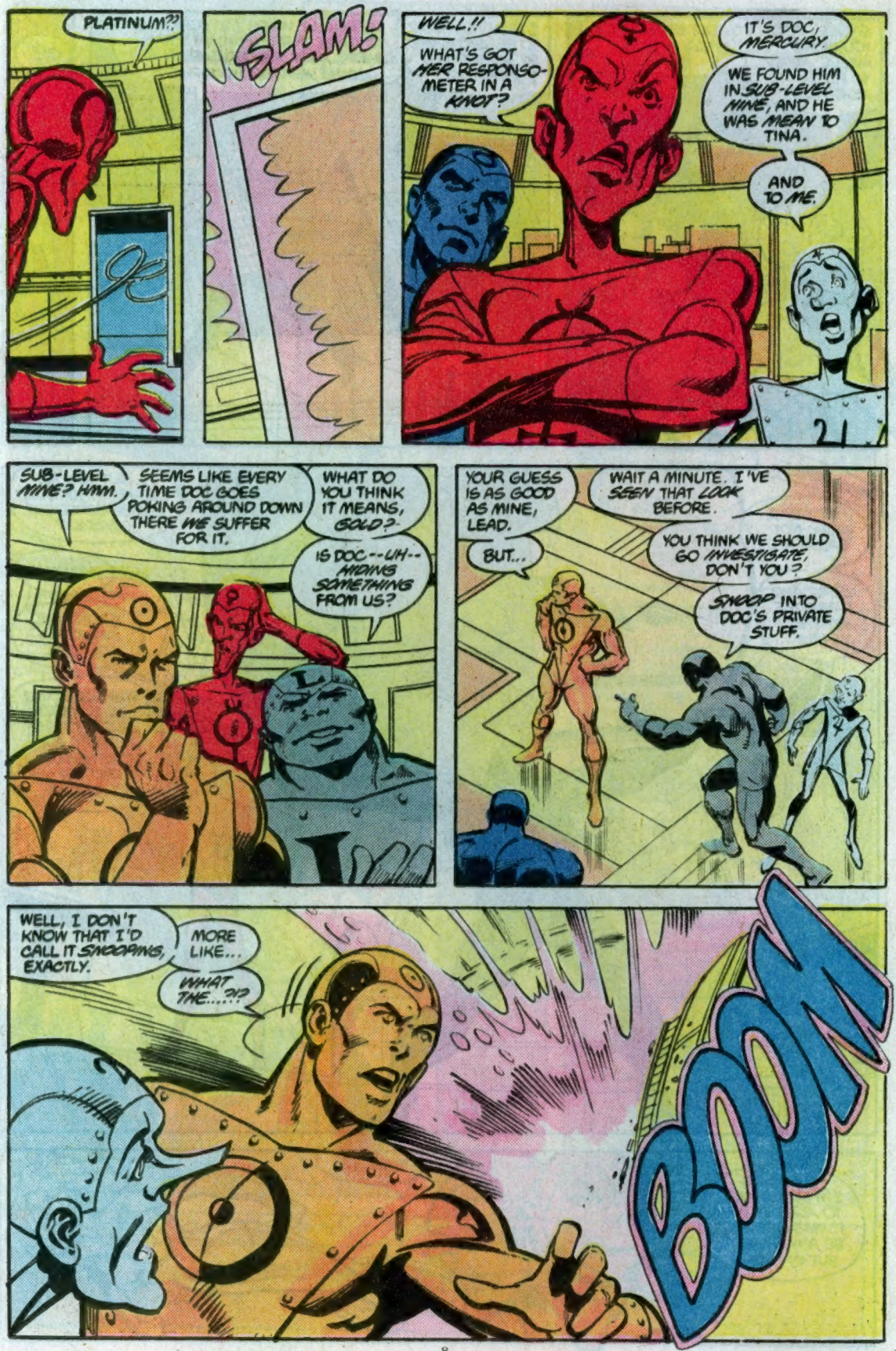
IN A NORMAL DAY A HUMAN BODY SHEDS THOUSANDS OF DEAD SKIN CELLS.
THIS IS ALSO TRUE OF THE HUMANOID ALIEN KNOWN AS SUPERMAN.

THE CELLS SLUICED FROM CLARK'S BODY, BY HIS SUDDEN DOUSING, MINGLED WITH THE CHEMICALS.
AND THOSE CHEMICALS, POSSESSED OF THE ABILITY TO MIMIC THE PROCESSES OF LIFE...


...FULFILLED THEIR FUNCTION.
THEY BEGAN TO IMITATE THE CELL STRUCTURE IN SUPERMAN'S ALIEN TISSUE.

AND SO...
TWO DAYS LATER...
IN A SUPER-SCIENCE LAB COMPLEX NOT FAR FROM METROPOLIS...
D-DOC?
D-DOC? WHERE ARE YOU?
G-GEE... I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER BEEN THIS FAR DOWN INTO THE S-SUB-BASEMENTS.
TH-THIS IS ALL STRANGE TERRITORY TO ME.
D-DOC?
DOC MAGNUS?
OH--ER--TIN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOWN HERE?
L-LOOKING FOR YOU, DOC. T-TINA WAS STARTING TO GET W-WORRIED WHEN YOU WERE G-GONE SO LONG.
IS EVERYTHING OKAY?
WHY--ER--YES, TIN. EVERYTHING IS FINE.
THERE'S NO REASON TO WORRY ABOUT ME.
WELL, HOW CAN WE HELP IT? YOU'VE ALREADY HAD ONE NERVOUS BREAKDOWN WORRYING ABOUT US.
IT'S ONLY FAIR WE WATCH OUT FOR YOU.
:SIGH: IT'S NOT "FAIR," TINA. I KEEP TELLING YOU IT'S REPROGRAMMING.
NOW--ER--LET'S GET BACK TOPSIDE.
TH-THAT'S FUNNY. DOC SURE SEEMS EAGER TO GET US AWAY FROM THAT D-DOOR HE WAS COMING OUT OF.
WHAT C-COULD BE IN THERE?
"REPROGRAMMING"!
YES. YES, IT IS, TINA.
POOH! I SUPPOSE YOU'RE GOING TO START UP AGAIN INSISTING THE WAY I FEEL ABOUT YOU IS REPROGRAMMING TOO!
AND FAULTY PROGRAMMING AT THAT!
THWIP! THWIP! THWIP!
OOOOOOOOOOOHHH!!
WILL MAGNUS, SOMETIMES YOU CAN BE SUCH A BEAST!!


G-GEE, DOC! YOU WERE AWFUL MEAN TO POOR PLATINUM!
Y-YOU KNOW SHE'S IN LOVE WITH YOU!...
SHUT UP, TIN!
I'M IN NO MOOD TO BE LECTURED BY SOMETHING I CREATED!
ESPECIALLY WHEN I'M STARTING TO THINK THAT CREATING YOU METAL MEN MAY HAVE BEEN A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY!!
?!?
MEANWHILE...
NOT BAD, IRON. NOT BAD AT ALL!!
LEAD AND I ARE THE HEAVIEST METALS...
...BUT YOU'RE SUPPORTING OUR COMBINED WEIGHT EASILY!
NNNPH!!
GRUNT AND SWEAT ALL YOU LIKE.
IT'S NOT GOING TO DO MUCH GOOD TO KEEP IN SHAPE AS LONG AS DOC WON'T LET US GO OUTSIDE.
I SWEAR, I'M BEGINNING TO FORGET WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE ANYWHERE BUT IN THIS--
TINA...??


PLATINUM?!
SLAM!
WELL!!
WHAT'S GOT HER RESPONSO-METER IN A KNOT?
IT'S DOC, MERCURY.
WE FOUND HIM IN SUB-LEVEL NINE, AND HE WAS MEAN TO TINA.
AND TO ME.
SUB-LEVEL NINE? HMM.
SEEMS LIKE EVERY TIME DOC GOES POKING AROUND DOWN THERE WE SUFFER FOR IT.
WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS, GOLD?
IS DOC--UH--HIDING SOMETHING FROM US?
YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE, LEAD.
BUT...
WAIT A MINUTE. I'VE SEEN THAT LOOK BEFORE.
YOU THINK WE SHOULD GO INVESTIGATE, DON'T YOU?
SNOOP INTO DOC'S PRIVATE STUFF.
WELL, I DON'T KNOW THAT I'D CALL IT SNOOPING, EXACTLY.
MORE LIKE...
WHAT THE.....?!
BOOM!

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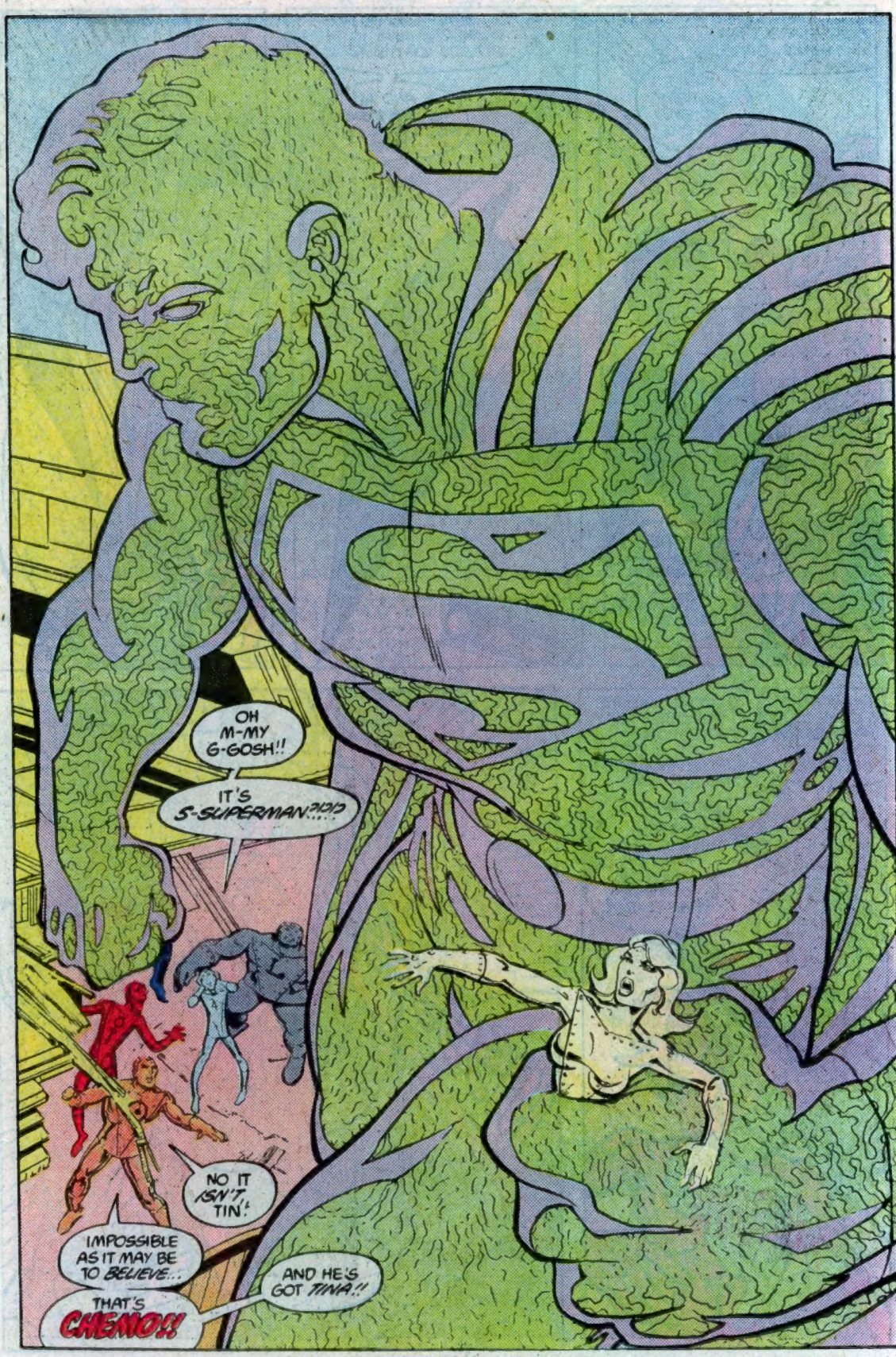
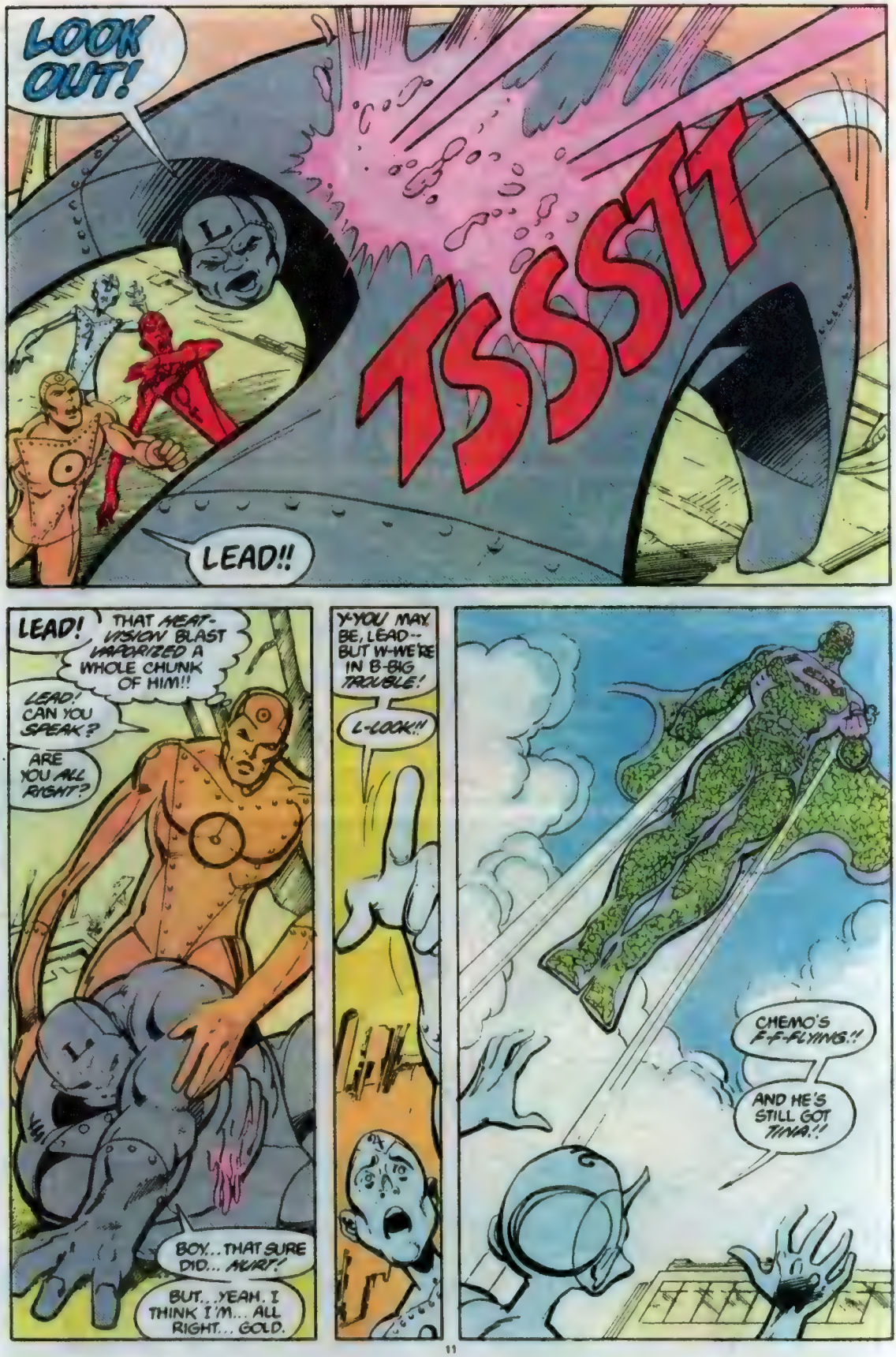
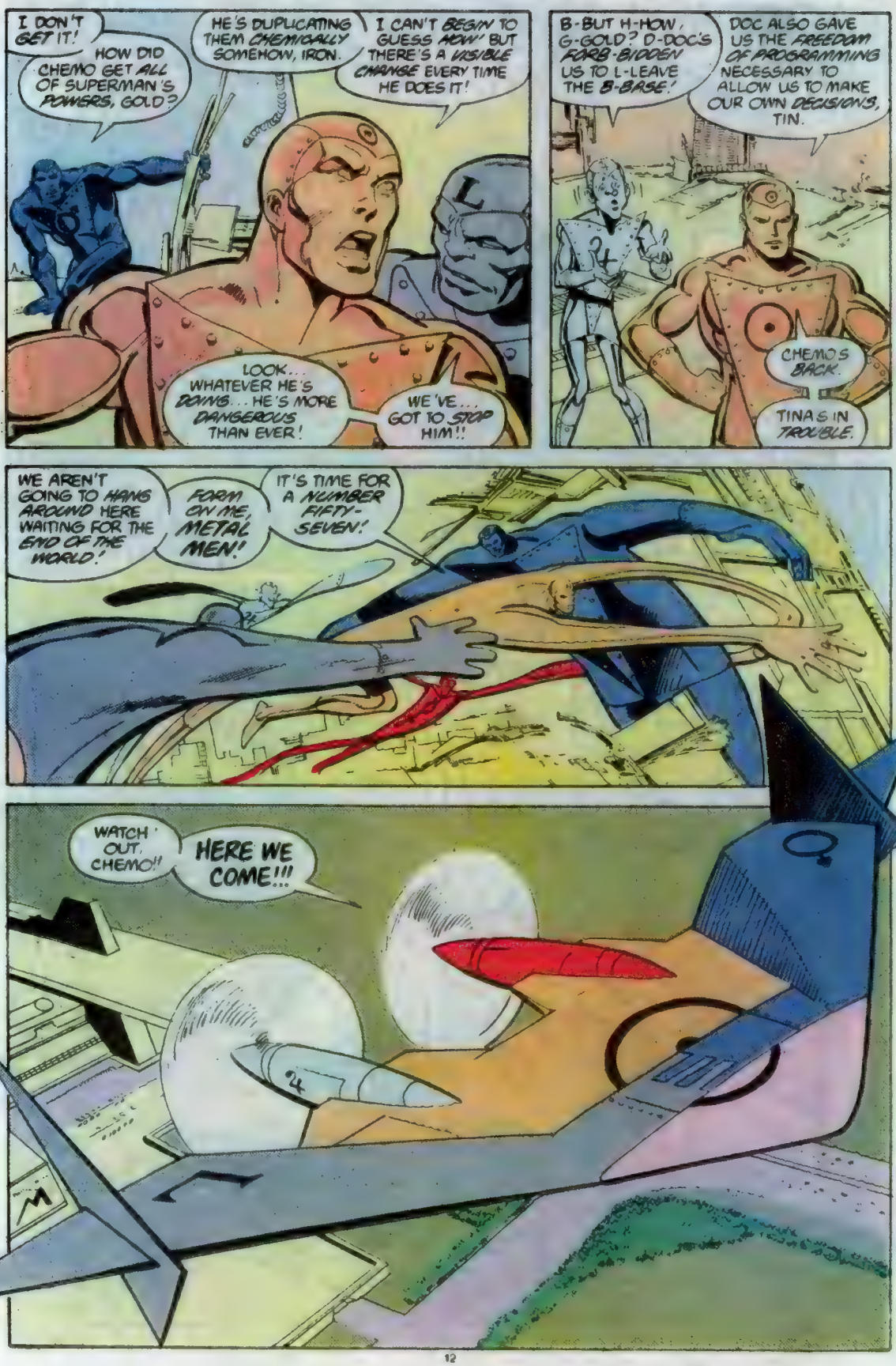
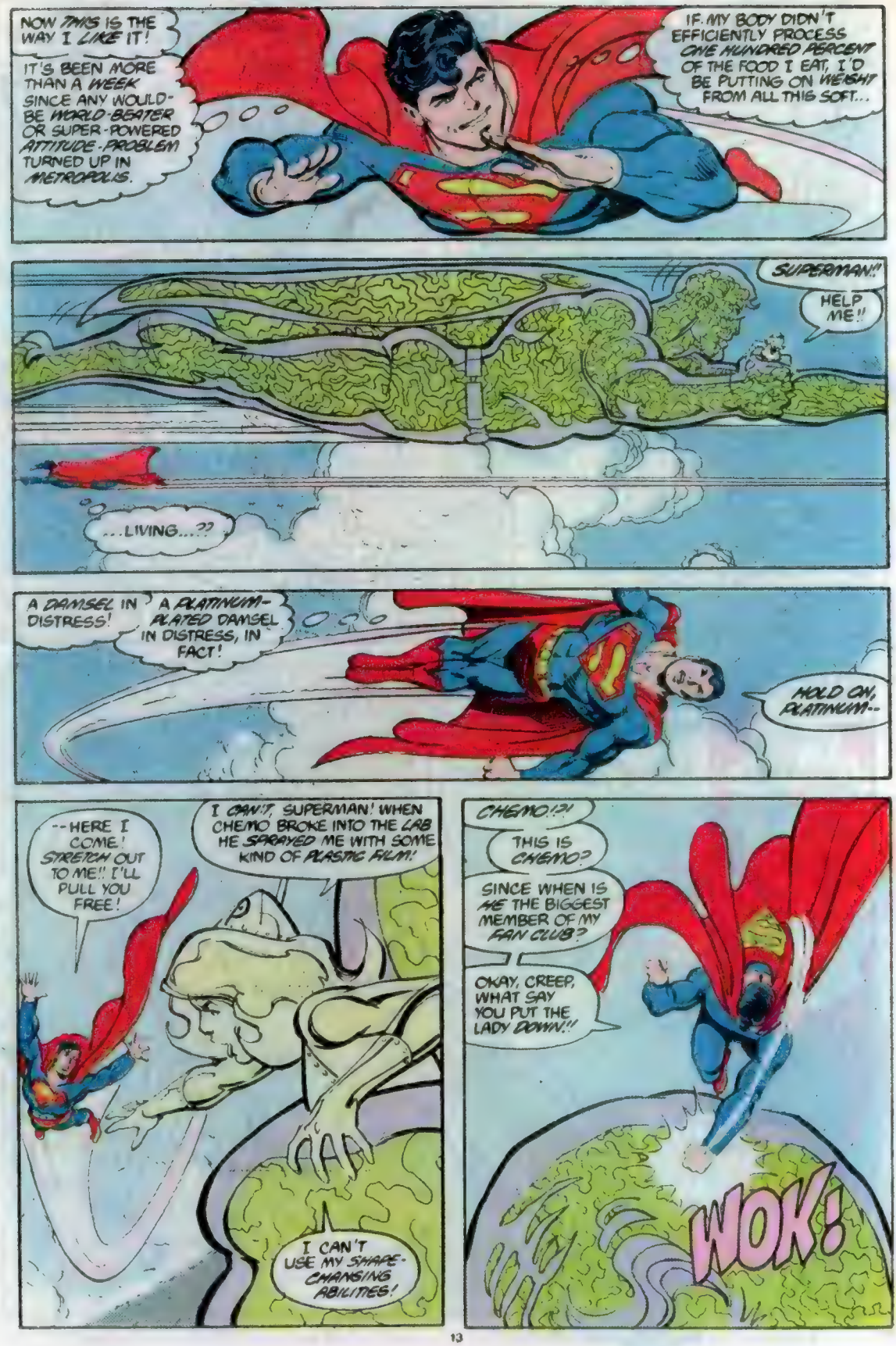

OH M-MY G-GOSH!!
IT'S S-SUPERMAN?!?!?
NO IT ISN'T, TIN!
IMPOSSIBLE AS IT MAY BE TO BELIEVE...
THAT'S CHEMO!!
AND HE'S GOT TINA!!

WELL, THEN, DON'T JUST STAND THERE GAWKING, GANG!
WE'VE BEATEN CHEMO BEFORE!
HEY! WATCH WHO YOU'RE SHOVING, BLUE BOY!
ALL WE NEED TO DO IS DRILL A HOLE IN THE PLASTIC OF HIS FOOT..
...AND ALL HIS CHEMICALS WILL DRAIN OUT AND...
TONG!
OH N-NO!! IRON C-COULDN'T P-PENETRATE CHEMO'S SURFACE!!
LOOKS LIKE THE BIG CREEP MAY HAVE MORE THAN JUST SUPERMAN'S SHAPE GOING FOR HIM!
LOOK! THERE'S SOME KIND OF CHEMICAL CHANGE HAPPENING!
HISSSSSS
HISSSSSS


LOOK OUT!
TSSST!!
LEAD!!
LEAD!
THAT HEAT-VISION BLAST VAPORIZED A WHOLE CHUNK OF HIM!!
LEAD! CAN YOU SPEAK?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
BOY... THAT SURE DID... HURT!
BUT... YEAH. I THINK I'M... ALL RIGHT... GOLD.
Y-YOU MAY BE, LEAD-- BUT W-WE'RE IN B-BIG TROUBLE!
L-LOOK!!
CHEMO'S F-F-FLYING!!
AND HE'S STILL GOT TINA!!


I DON'T GET IT!
HOW DID CHEMO GET ALL OF SUPERMAN'S POWERS, GOLD?
HE'S DUPLICATING THEM CHEMICALLY SOMEHOW, IRON.
I CAN'T BEGIN TO GUESS HOW! BUT THERE'S A VISIBLE CHANGE EVERY TIME HE DOES IT!
LOOK... WHATEVER HE'S DOING... HE'S MORE DANGEROUS THAN EVER!
WE'VE... GOT TO STOP HIM!!
B-BUT H-HOW, G-GOLD? D-DOC'S FORB-BIDDEN US TO L-LEAVE THE B-BASE!
DOC ALSO GAVE US THE FREEDOM OF PROGRAMMING NECESSARY TO ALLOW US TO MAKE OUR OWN DECISIONS, TIN.
CHEMO'S BACK.
TINA'S IN TROUBLE.
WE AREN'T GOING TO HANG AROUND HERE WAITING FOR THE END OF THE WORLD!
FORM ON ME, METAL MEN!
IT'S TIME FOR A NUMBER FIFTY-SEVEN!
WATCH OUT, CHEMO!!
HERE WE COME!!!


NOW THIS IS THE WAY I LIKE IT!
IT'S BEEN MORE THAN A WEEK SINCE ANY WOULD-BE WORLD-BEATER OR SUPER-POWERED ATTITUDE-PROBLEM TURNED UP IN METROPOLIS.
IF MY BODY DIDN'T EFFICIENTLY PROCESS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT OF THE FOOD I EAT, I'D BE PUTTING ON WEIGHT FROM ALL THIS SOFT...
SUPERMAN!!
HELP ME!!
...LIVING...??
A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS!
A PLATINUM-PLATED DAMSEL IN DISTRESS, IN FACT!
HOLD ON, PLATINUM--
--HERE I COME! STRETCH OUT TO ME!! I'LL PULL YOU FREE!
I CAN'T, SUPERMAN! WHEN CHEMO BROKE INTO THE LAB HE SPRAYED ME WITH SOME KIND OF PLASTIC FILM!
I CAN'T USE MY SHAPE-CHANGING ABILITIES!
CHEMO!?!
THIS IS CHEMO?
SINCE WHEN IS HE THE BIGGEST MEMBER OF MY FAN CLUB?
OKAY, CREEP, WHAT SAY YOU PUT THE LADY DOWN!!
WOK!

OH-HHH!!
D-DON'T WORRY, TINA!
WE'VE G-GOT YOU!!
GUYS!
YOU LEFT THE LAB!
AGAINST DOC'S ORDERS!!
WE... HAD TO, TINA. WE... ALWAYS LOOK AFTER... OUR OWN.
QUICK, GOLD... SCRAPE THAT PLASTIC COATING... OFF HER!
THE REST OF THE METAL MEN!
GOOD!
I COULD HAVE FLOWN DOWN AND CAUGHT TINA LONG BEFORE SHE HIT THE GROUND...
...BUT THEIR TIMELY ARRIVAL ALLOWS ME TO CONCENTRATE ON WHAT'S HAPPENED TO CHEMO.
SPECIFICALLY... HOW THE HECK WE GOT MY POWERS!!

HE'S C-COMING STRAIGHT AT US!!
HE MAY BE TOO FAST FOR EVEN SUPERMAN TO KEEP UP WITH!
OKAY, TEAM...
BREAK UP AND...
RE-FORM!
NUMBER TWENTY-ONE!!
WE'RE GOING TO NEED OUR COMBINED MIGHT AGAINST HIM!
I HATE THIS FORMATION!
IT'S A COMPLETE WASTE OF MY UNIQUE QUALITIES!
QUIT GRIPING, MERCURY!
COME ON, CHEMO!
WE'RE READY FOR YOU NOW!!
GREAT SCOTT!
THE METAL MEN HAVE FORMED INTO A SINGLE, GIANT ROBOT!
IT'S AS BIG AS CHEMO...
BUT IS IT AS POWERFUL...??

"UHH... YES, I'D SAY IT IS!!"
WONG!
HISSSS!!
HEY... WHAT IS THIS GOOP??
IT'S THE SAME CHEMICAL EMULSION HE SPRAYED ME WITH!
WE WON'T BE ABLE TO CHANGE SHAPE NOW!
WELL, THAT'S NO PROBLEM!
WE DON'T NEED TO!!

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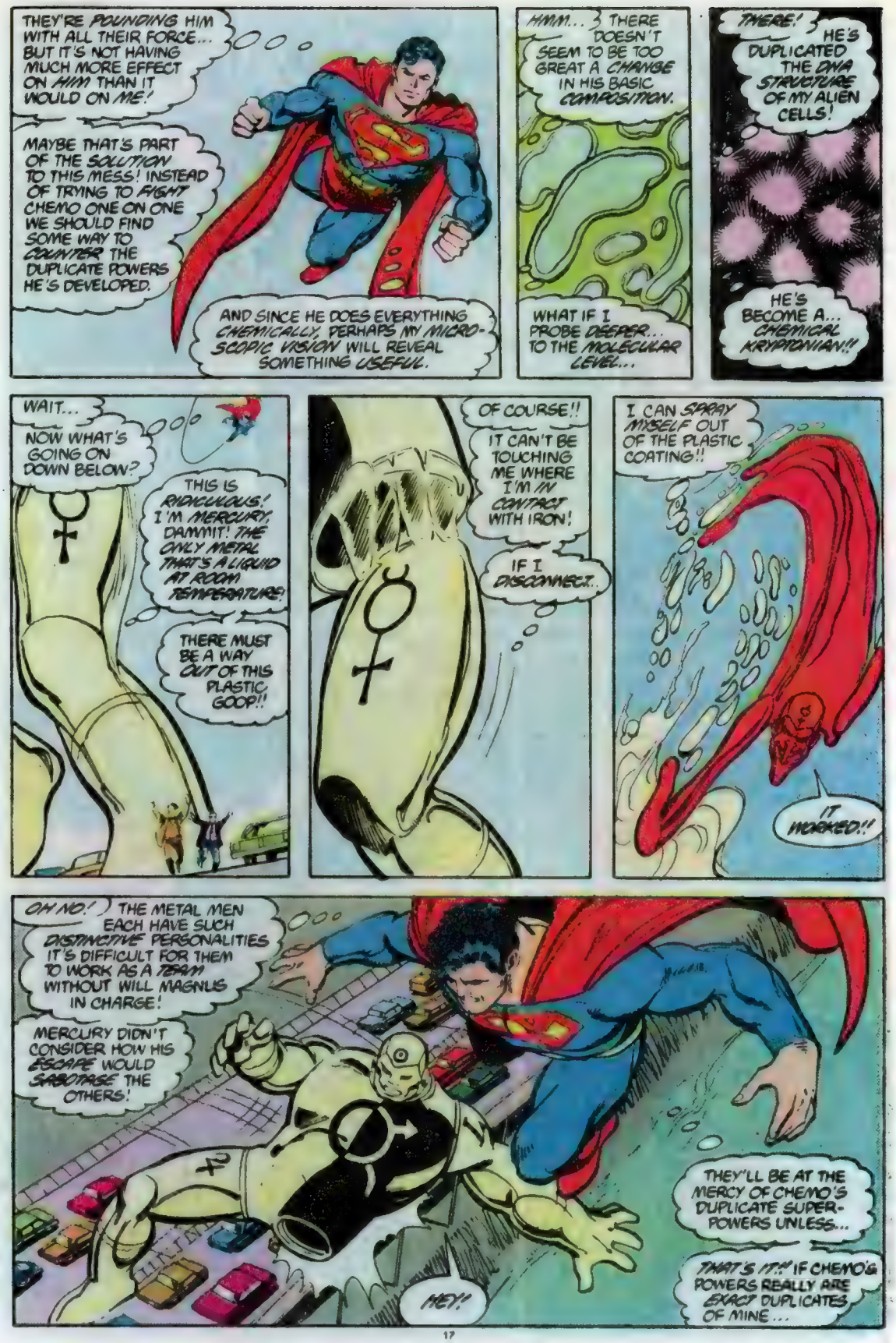
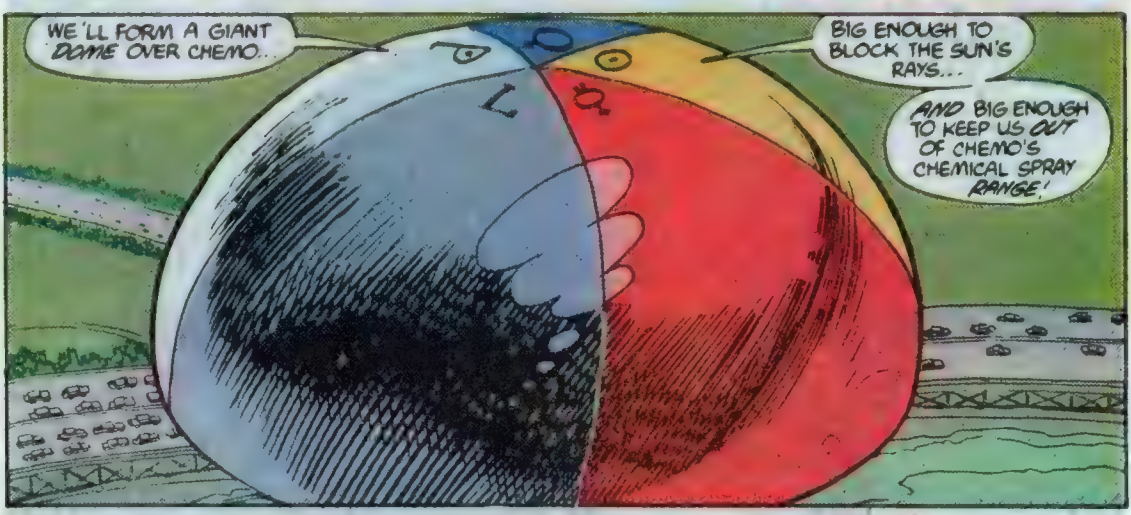
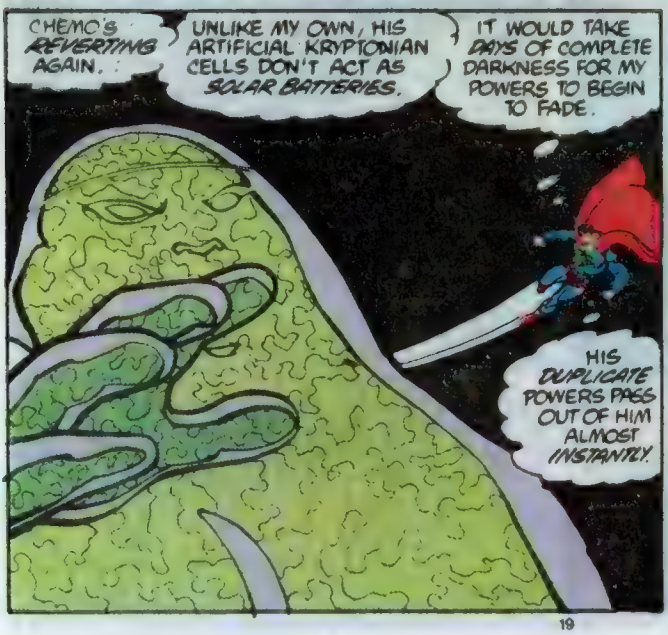

THEY'RE POUNDING HIM WITH ALL THEIR FORCE... BUT IT'S NOT HAVING MUCH MORE EFFECT ON HIM THAN IT WOULD ON ME!
MAYBE THAT'S PART OF THE SOLUTION TO THIS MESS! INSTEAD OF TRYING TO FIGHT CHEMO ONE ON ONE WE SHOULD FIND SOME WAY TO COUNTER THE DUPLICATE POWERS HE'S DEVELOPED.
AND SINCE HE DOES EVERYTHING CHEMICALLY, PERHAPS MY MICROSCOPIC VISION WILL REVEAL SOMETHING USEFUL.
HMM... THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE TOO GREAT A CHANGE IN HIS BASIC COMPOSITION.
WHAT IF I PROBE DEEPER... TO THE MOLECULAR LEVEL...
THERE! HE'S DUPLICATED THE DNA STRUCTURE OF MY ALIEN CELLS!
HE'S BECOME A... CHEMICAL KRYPTONIAN!!
WAIT...
NOW WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN BELOW?
THIS IS RIDICULOUS! I'M MERCURY, DAMMIT! THE ONLY METAL THAT'S A LIQUID AT ROOM TEMPERATURE!
THERE MUST BE A WAY OUT OF THIS PLASTIC GOOP!!
OF COURSE!!
IT CAN'T BE TOUCHING ME WHERE I'M IN CONTACT WITH IRON!
IF I DISCONNECT...
I CAN SPRAY MYSELF OUT OF THE PLASTIC COATING!!
IT WORKED!!
OH NO! THE METAL MEN EACH HAVE SUCH DISTINCTIVE PERSONALITIES IT'S DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO WORK AS A TEAM WITHOUT WILL MAGNUS IN CHARGE!
MERCURY DIDN'T CONSIDER HOW HIS ESCAPE WOULD SABOTAGE THE OTHERS!
HEY!
THEY'LL BE AT THE MERCY OF CHEMO'S DUPLICATE SUPER-POWERS UNLESS...
THAT'S IT!! IF CHEMO'S POWERS REALLY ARE EXACT DUPLICATES OF MINE...

THERE IS A WAY TO STOP HIM!
METAL MEN! QUICKLY! WE'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO CUT OFF CHEMO FROM THE SUN'S LIGHT!
HEY!
I CAN D-DO THAT!
I CAN GET OUT OF THIS P-PLASTIC THE SAME WAY M-MERCURY DID AND...
TIN! NO! BLOCKING RADIATION IS WHAT I DO BEST!!
YOU'D N-NEVER BE ABLE TO SPREAD YOURSELF THIN ENOUGH TO C-COVER ALL OF CHEMO, LEAD!
LEAVE THIS T-TO M-ME!!
IT'S WORKING! DEPRIVED OF THE SOLAR RAYS THAT GIVE ME MY POWERS CHEMO IS REVERTING TO HIS NORMAL FORM.
BUT... BE CAREFUL, TIN! HE'S STILL POWERFUL EVEN WITHOUT...
TIN!!
LOOK OUT!
BWOOSH!!

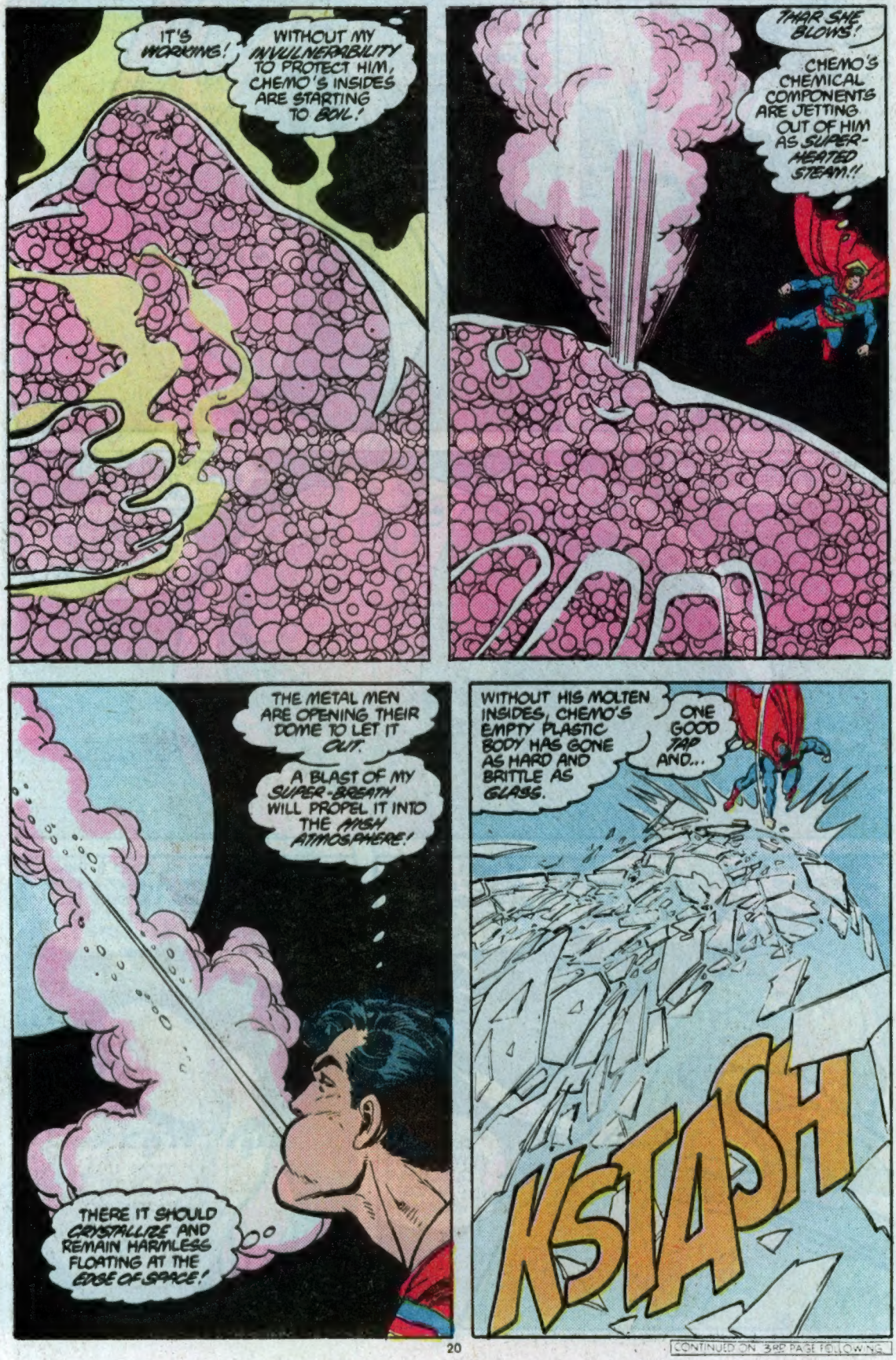
TIN!
HE'S BEEN BLASTED INTO LIQUID FRAGMENTS!
AND CHEMO IS REGAINING MY SHAPE AND POWERS!

DON'T WORRY, SUPERMAN!
TIN HAD THE RIGHT IDEA! HE WAS JUST TOO CLOSE!
SPREAD OUT AS THIN AS YOU CAN, EVERYBODY!


WE'LL FORM A GIANT DOME OVER CHEMO..
BIG ENOUGH TO BLOCK THE SUN'S RAYS...
AND BIG ENOUGH TO KEEP US OUT OF CHEMO'S CHEMICAL SPRAY RANGE!


CHEMO'S REVERTING AGAIN..
UNLIKE MY OWN, HIS ARTIFICIAL KRYPTONIAN CELLS DON'T ACT AS SOLAR BATTERIES.
IT WOULD TAKE DAYS OF COMPLETE DARKNESS FOR MY POWERS TO BEGIN TO FADE.
HIS DUPLICATE POWERS PASS OUT OF HIM ALMOST INSTANTLY.

NOW I'D BETTER DO SOMETHING TO STOP HIM BEFORE HE FINDS SOME WAY TO BLAST A HOLE IN THE METAL MEN'S DOME.
AND I THINK HEAT-VISION SHOULD BE JUST THE TICKET!


IT'S WORKING!
WITHOUT MY INVULNERABILITY TO PROTECT HIM, CHEMO'S INSIDES ARE STARTING TO BOIL!
THAR SHE BLOWS!
CHEMO'S CHEMICAL COMPONENTS ARE JETTING OUT OF HIM AS SUPER-HEATED STEAM!!
THE METAL MEN ARE OPENING THEIR DOME TO LET IT OUT.
A BLAST OF MY SUPER-BREATH WILL PROPEL IT INTO THE MSH ATMOSPHERE!
THERE IT SHOULD CRYSTALLIZE AND REMAIN HARMLESS FLOATING AT THE EDGE OF SPACE!
WITHOUT HIS MOLTEN INSIDES, CHEMO'S EMPTY PLASTIC BODY HAS GONE AS HARD AND BRITTLE AS GLASS.
ONE GOOD TAP AND...
KSTASH

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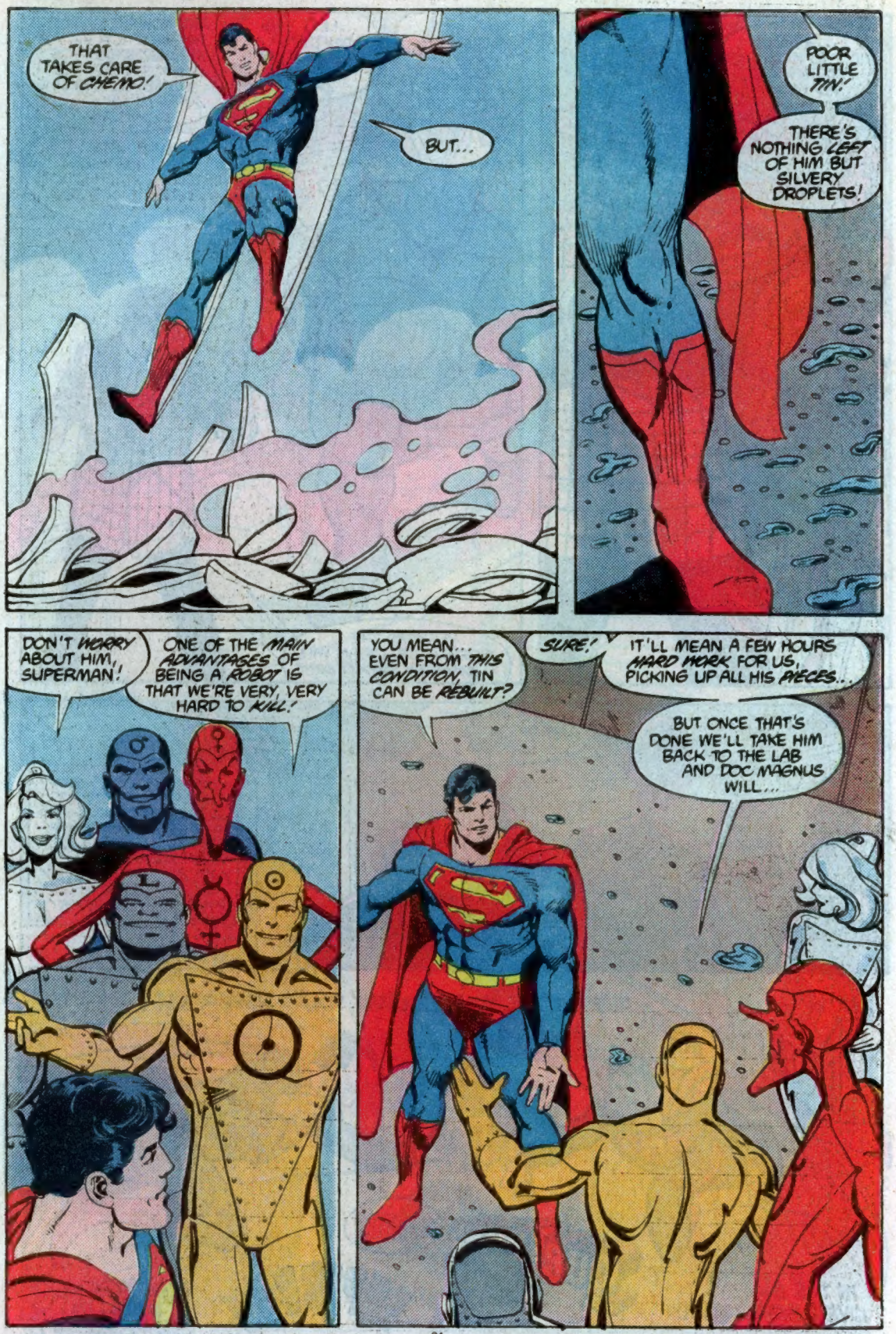
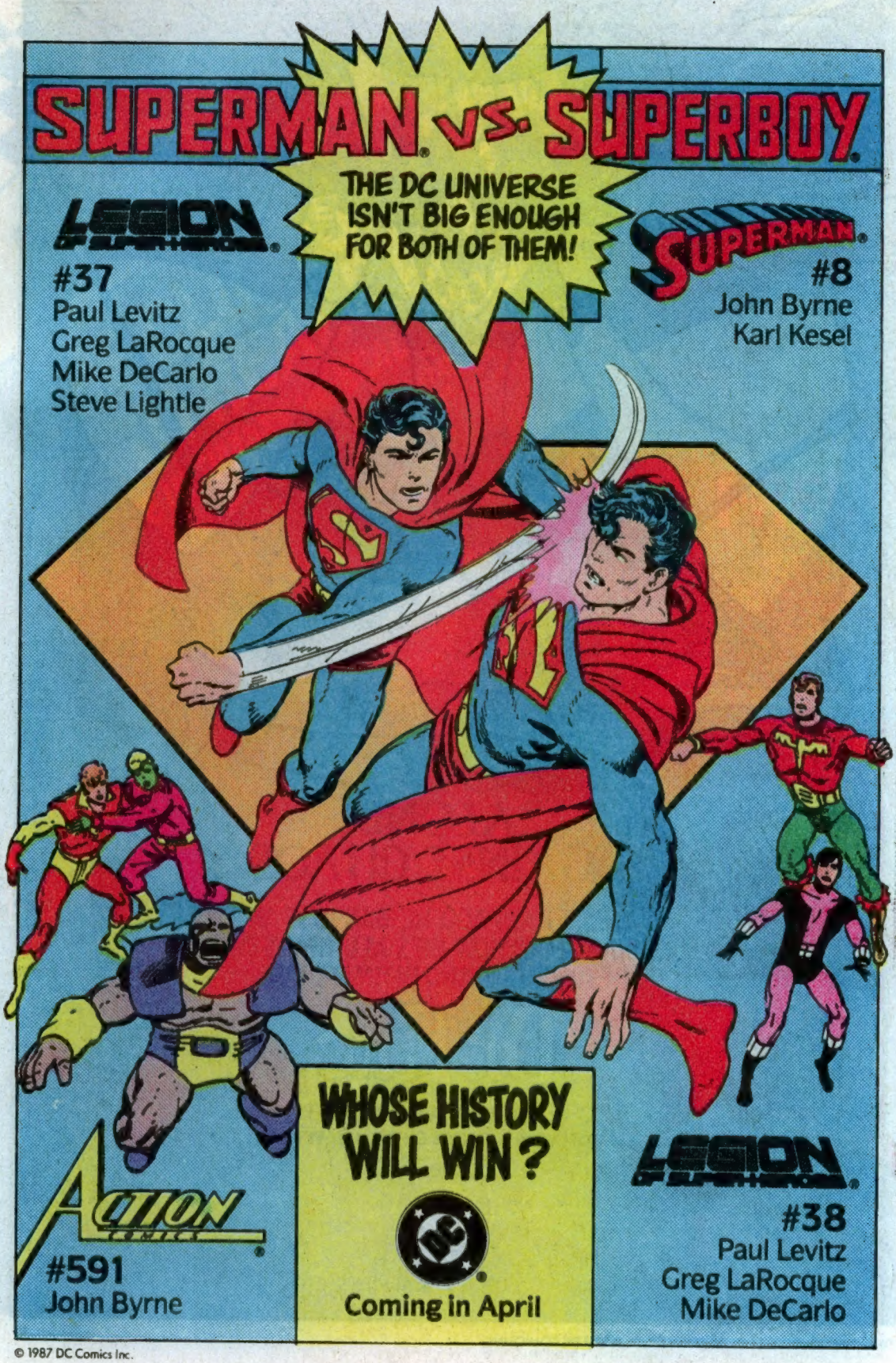

THAT TAKES CARE OF CHEMO!
BUT...
POOR LITTLE TIN!
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT OF HIM BUT SILVERY DROPLETS!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM, SUPERMAN!
ONE OF THE MAIN ADVANTAGES OF BEING A ROBOT IS THAT WE'RE VERY, VERY HARD TO KILL!
YOU MEAN... EVEN FROM THIS CONDITION, TIN CAN BE REBUILT?
SURE!
IT'LL MEAN A FEW HOURS HARD WORK FOR US, PICKING UP ALL HIS PIECES...
BUT ONCE THAT'S DONE WE'LL TAKE HIM BACK TO THE LAB AND DOC MAGNUS WILL...

...REFUSE TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT!
BUT...BUT... BUT, DOC!!
YOU CAN'T... MEAN THAT! POOR TIN...
...LEFT THIS COMPOUND AGAINST MY EXPRESS ORDERS!
AND NOW, HE'S PAID THE PRICE FOR HIS DISOBEDIENCE! IT'S HIGH TIME YOU ALL STOPPED ACTING LIKE IRRESPONSIBLE CHILDREN--
--AND STARTED ACTING LIKE THE INTELLIGENT, PRACTICAL ROBOTS I INTENDED YOU TO BE!
PERHAPS THE DESTRUCTION OF TIN WILL SMARTEN YOU ALL UP!!
THAT'S MY LAST WORD ON THE SUBJECT!!
SLAM
CURIOUS? CONFUSED? THE DARK SECRETS OF SUB-LEVEL NINE, AND THE FATE OF THE METAL MEN WILL BE REVEALED KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED FOR FUTURE METAL MEN ANNOUNCEMENTS!
BUT, MORE IMMEDIATELY...
NEXT IN ACTION COMICS #591 THE BATTLE YOU THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER SEE!
SUPERMAN VERSUS SUPERBOY
IN THE SKIES OVER SMALLVILLE
IT STARTS NEXT WEEK IN SUPERMAN #8!



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